

**MEMORIAL**

OF

**SUNDRY CITIZENS OF THE COUNTY OF CAMDEN,**

IN THE

**STATE OF GEORGIA,**

IN RELATION TO

**Internal Improvements.**

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**FEBRUARY 2, 1824.**

Referred to the Committee on Roads and Canals.

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**1824.**



## MEMORIAL.

*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States,*

The petition of the undersigned, inhabitants of the county of Camden, and citizens of the state of Georgia,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

That your petitioners, not only as citizens of the state of Georgia, but of the United States, have beheld, with deep interest, the enterprizing spirit which has been exhibited by the citizens of some of our sister states in the Union, as well as by their Legislatures, in relation to their internal navigation and improvement. That, while they are convinced that this spirit of internal improvement is peculiarly adapted to the genius of our republican form of Government, and the well, being and happiness of our common country; they, on the other hand, are equally convinced that Internal Improvements, when accomplished, are calculated not only to encourage agriculture, promote commerce, facilitate a free and general intercourse between different parts of the United States, but particularly tend to the strengthening of the Union. Objects of Internal Improvement, wherever they may be found, are deeply interesting; but the enterprizing spirit by which they are accomplished, is much more interesting; and, wherever it shall appear, your petitioners believe that it will not fail to draw the serious attention of your honorable body, as well as your patronage and support.

Your petitioners, therefore, deeply feeling the great importance of Internal Improvements at large, and particularly those in relation to their own state, cannot refrain from calling the attention of your honorable body to one object of the kind, within their state, which, if ever accomplished, cannot fail of being of incalculable advantage and benefit to the several states in the Union, but to the General Government itself. Of this they will attempt to convince your honorable body by a candid statement of facts.

A safe inland water communication, your petitioners believe, has uniformly been found, not only to be the cheapest method of trans-

porting merchandise of every kind, from place to place, but to be the safest way in which it can be transported in time of war or peace. The application of this principle to internal improvement, by canals, has been found to be highly useful and important. The perfection to which the art of canalling has been carried in our country; the facility and cheapness with which they have been completed, and the incalculable advantages which flow from such improvements, induce your petitioners to the belief, that the canal which they are about to propose to the consideration of your honorable body, when taken in connection with its importance to the United States, and the practicability of accomplishing it, will meet with your countenance, recommendation, and support. The object of internal improvement then, towards which they would beg leave to call the attention of your honorable body, is the cutting a canal within the boundary lines of this state and county, from the waters of the St. Mary's river, along the southern extremity of the Oquefenoka Swamp, to the waters of the Suwanee river. The distance, from the best information your petitioners have as yet been able to obtain, in relation to the same, will not exceed twenty-five miles, through a level country, and, from other information, your petitioners are under the belief that the above distance can be much shortened. Your petitioners regret that, on this important subject, they have it not in their power to transmit herewith, for the better information of your honorable body, a map lately made by Charles Vignioles, from actual surveys of East and West Florida, and of that part of our state through which it is proposed to cut said canal, whereby, if your honorable body can obtain the same, it will be sufficiently evident that the said canal is not only a practicable and important undertaking, both to this state and the United States, but one easy to be accomplished. Your petitioners believe that the advantages this canal would open to the United States, generally, are incalculable; and, like every great work of the kind, can never be realized until actually accomplished.

To convince your honorable body, therefore, of the practicability of cutting this canal, and the advantages it would offer, both in time of war and peace, to the United States, and to this state, your petitioners would beg leave to submit a few facts for their consideration. East and West Florida have now become an integral part of the United States. The difficulties that might exist under the Government of any other nation, as to the free use of their waters, both in peace and war, cannot now exist. The St. Mary's bar is acknowledged to be as good as any bar in this state; far better and safer than any bar south of it, for the distance of nearly fifteen hundred miles sea coast. This bar can at all times, with safety, carry over vessels drawing eighteen feet water, while there is no bar between it and the Island of Cuba, that can, at all times, with safety, carry over vessels drawing nine feet water. The town of St. Mary's is a port of entry; its local situation pleasant and healthy, situated in a bend of the St. Mary's river, forming, at all times, a safe and commodious harbor for vessels of any tonnage: It has, also, in the opinion of judges, been

declared to be the safest and best harbor and station, for the vessels of the United States, that is to be found in any of the Southern states. It is only five miles distant, by measurement, from the sea coast—another advantage which it has over every other sea port in this state. It is likewise surrounded by salt water, and open to a pure sea breeze daily, and consequently not subject to many of the fevers of southern climates. The St. Mary's river would, at all times, if requisite, carry up vessels drawing eighteen feet water to the mouth of the canal, where it would be cut, and from every information your petitioners have been able to obtain, the navigation of the river Suwanee is equally good. These are facts, which cannot be denied. Thus, then, by cutting a canal of but twenty-five miles, through a level country, we have, from the mouth of the St. Mary's river to the mouth of the Suwanee, a safe inland navigation of about three hundred miles—not one-fourth the distance by sea. The expense of cutting this canal, your petitioners believe, would be trifling, when compared with the great advantages to be derived from it by the United States. They have every reason to believe, from the best calculations that can be made in relation to the expense, that its cost would not exceed one hundred thousand dollars. Thus much for the practicability of cutting this canal.

But, what are the advantages which this canal, if cut, would secure to the United States? We answer, many. The protection of commerce, in time of peace, is of great advantage to the merchant, but more particularly so in time of war. The protection of commerce in time of war, ought to be the chief aim of every legislature, and it will no doubt be admitted by your honorable body, that any internal improvement that will secure this advantage; that will facilitate commerce and commercial intelligence; and open a safe inland communication, both in war and peace, must be of the highest importance to our country. This, your petitioners believe, will be found to be the practical result of this canal, should it be opened.

In a few years, to all probability, the population of East and West Florida will be great; the produce of their soil, which they will raise, will be immense, and their commerce extensive. The advantages which this canal, if opened, would offer to them, would be unquestionably great. The present reciprocal commerce of the northern, as well as southern states, with the state of Louisiana, and with her great and commercial sea-port, New Orleans, together with the commerce of South America, is immense.

In what way and manner, then, is this immense commerce now carried on? It is carried around the barren cape of East Florida by sea, whose coast cannot be less than twelve hundred miles, through the dangerous navigation of the West India Islands; at an immense risk of lives and property; at a high rate of insurance to the merchant; not only subject to the natural dangers of the sea, but open, at all times, to attacks from pirates, who have, and probably ever will infest that coast. This great commerce must, consequently, be carried on the same way in time of war; unprotected, and, of course,

with additional dangers and risks. All these difficulties, dangers, and risks, which this commerce is now subject to, would be effectually removed by the opening of this canal; and would be the means, not only of preserving an incalculable amount of property, but thousands of invaluable lives, and of securing to the merchants of the United States, both in peace and war, a safe, easy, and quick inland communication, for the transportation of their goods.

There is yet another view of the advantages to be derived from this canal, towards which your petitioners would beg leave to draw, more strongly, the attention of your honorable body. The difficulty, length of time, and heavy expense of transporting the mail of the United States from New Orleans to Washington, and back, by the present route, has, as your petitioners believe, become a subject of serious complaint among the commercial part of our community. The advantage, then, which this canal, if opened, would secure to the General Government, in facilitating the transportation of this mail, as well as rendering its transportation less expensive, would be so great, that your petitioners believe that, as soon as this canal shall be completed, your honorable body would immediately order it to be made the mail route of the United States to and from New Orleans. It is calculated that by this way it could, at least, be transported in half the time, and at one half the expense less, than at present. Your petitioners feel themselves incapable to go into a full detail of all the advantages to be derived from this canal; but enough they hope has been shewn, to convince your honorable body, not only of its practicability and importance, but sufficient to draw the attention of your honorable body to this interesting subject.

Your petitioners, however, cannot close this petition without acknowledging the great importance of this canal to the state of Georgia. As citizens of this state, they have looked with pride at the growing political importance of their state—inferior to but few in resources and wealth—a state which presents to the enlarged and liberal mind of their Legislature an object of internal improvement which ought to be their study to accomplish and effect, and which, if accomplished and effected solely by their own powers and resources, will be highly honorable and creditable to their state. Your petitioners, however, have the pleasure to state, that they have, during the session of their last Legislature, made a similar representation of the facts contained in this petition, and of the advantages to be derived from cutting this Canal, and from the report that has been made by the Committee on Internal Improvement in relation to the same, they have the most sanguine hope, that it will meet with their approbation and support. Your petitioners, however, sensible of the great importance of this Canal to the United States, generally, as well as to the Government, cannot pass by the present session of Congress without calling the attention of your honorable body to this important undertaking, an undertaking in which you are deeply interested, and which they believe cannot fail with your countenance and support. We would, therefore, confidently appeal to your honorable body, and ask

you whether, under such a representation of facts as have been made by your petitioners—whether, as men and as statesmen, you will be cold and indifferent with regard to the progress of this great and important work; and whether you will not, by your influence, recommendation, and support, use every exertion to further its completion? We cannot, for one moment, think that, as the guardians of the high interests of our flourishing nation; as statesmen, gifted with talents, integrity, and expanded views, you will not only give it that serious consideration which its importance demands, but your effectual aid and support.

Your petitioners would therefore pray, that your honourable body would be pleased to take the subject into your serious consideration, and to pass such laws, or resolutions, expressive of your favorable opinion of said canal, and of its advantages to the United States, as your honorable body shall think proper; and that your honorable body would afford the said work such further countenance and support, as to your honorable body shall seem proper, and its importance demands.

